

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 982

By Sparks

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize the Kurdish community of Nashville.

WHEREAS, Kurds, or the people of Kurdistan, once Mesopotamia, are among the most ancient people of the world, and Kurdish culture has made profound contributions to civilization, especially in agriculture, written language, and trade; and

WHEREAS, after World War I, Kurdistan was divided among four nations, despite promises of sovereignty; the repressive, and often genocidal, policies of these nations have forced many Kurds to emigrate from their homeland and resettle in small communities in Europe, Australia, and the United States; and

WHEREAS, Kurdistan is now a semi-autonomous region of northern Iraq and home to forty million Kurds who represent the largest ethnic group in the world without its own sovereign state; and

WHEREAS, many Kurds seeking refuge and freedom have settled in Nashville, which today has the largest Kurdish population among U.S. cities at approximately 15,000; and

WHEREAS, living mostly in the South Nashville neighborhood known as Little Kurdistan, Nashville's Kurdish community is a diverse population of professionals, merchants, and entrepreneurs; primarily Muslim, the community also includes Jews, Christians, Yazidis, and many with a more secular outlook; and

WHEREAS, our hospitality, compassion, and welcoming hearts have allowed Kurdish immigrants, a people fleeing for their very lives, to coalesce into a thriving community of hard-working, productive citizens who contribute to the well-being and prosperity of Nashville and Middle Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, the generations of Kurds who embrace Nashville as their home have established a deep-rooted connection to the city, and the earliest immigrants from the 1970s now serve as the elders of the community; and

WHEREAS, like any community, Nashville's Kurdish population faces many challenges; the Tennessee Kurdish Community Council (TKCC) seeks to address and resolve important issues, such as English proficiency among recent immigrants, engagement in American civic responsibilities, and positive lifestyles for youth; and

WHEREAS, the TKCC has initiated the Kurdish Project to educate the greater community on Kurdish values, culture, and history and promote greater understanding of the Kurdish people; and

WHEREAS, the Kurdish community of Nashville has overcome many obstacles to find freedom and success in the promised land, and these outstanding people are worthy of our approbation; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the members of the Kurdish community of Nashville for their courage and perseverance and recognize them as vital contributors to our society who personify the American Dream.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.